

Chapter Eight

Please note. A footnote in the **RSV** says with regard to 7.53 through 8.11 “this account, omitted in many ancient manuscripts, appears to be an authentic incident in Jesus’ ministry though not belonging originally to John’s Gospel.” Because the critical Greek text begins with vs. 12, so will the notations, thereby omitting the incident with regard to the woman caught in adultery. Interestingly it’s the woman who suffers the penalty of death with no mention of the man who can be just as guilty if not more so.

As for what follows, it is a series of rapid, mostly contentious back-and-forth exchanges between Jesus and the Pharisees. That gives the text a rather choppy approach while attempting to remain faithful to the profound revelation Jesus is giving. At such a point it’s helpful to be reminded that the goal of this document is to read the Gospel in the spirit of *lectio divina*, nothing more. As for Jesus speaking as he does, it’s as though he does it not for the benefit of those present whose hearts are hardened but for later generations. So whoever is recording Jesus’ words is to be thanked profusely.

Vs. 12 starts with the apparently insignificant *palin* or “again” but is important by reason of showing that Jesus is undeterred with regard to speaking about his mission and identity. Essential to this, of course, is his relationship with the Father. Actually *palin* serves to introduce an antagonistic relationship between Jesus and the Jews that will continue for the rest of the chapter. Sometimes you wonder if his message would have been better received if he had toned down his words. However, when you come down to it and wish it were so, we would be the poorer.

Jesus is quite bold, claiming to be the light of the world, *phos* with the definite article, not just “a light” with regard to *kosmos*. The person who follows Jesus-as-light—*akoloutheo* more as to fall in line with someone leading—will not walk in darkness, *peripateo* literally as to walk around and hence wander aimlessly. So following Jesus-as-light results in having the light of life or *zoe*. Note that the *akoloutheo* is in the present tense whereas both *peripateo* and *echo* (the latter as to have) are in the future tense. Such walking-around infers not yet having come into one’s possession but hopefully will do so. The darkness or *skotia* Jesus mentions suggests that falling into such gloom is ever present.

In vs. 13 the ever present Pharisees respond with a seemingly reasonable objection to what on the surface is a preposterous claim by Jesus. The real sticking point is that Jesus seems to be bearing witness to himself, *martureo* which to them is a kind of self-centeredness. However, it turns out to be yet another way of hoping to trip him up. Although they and Jesus are the only ones mentioned, we can assume that other people were drawn to the confrontation. We can assume this because vs. 2 says that he had come to the temple. While they may have been sympathetic toward Jesus, they dare not express it because they’d be

subject the wrath of the Pharisees. By this stage of the game even these observers knew for good that their religious leaders had made up their minds to do in Jesus. Nothing new. It's simply a question when.

Vs. 14 begins with the apparently prosaic "Jesus answered." Prosaic in the sense that it gives the impression he wasn't bothered by what the Pharisees were saying of him. For all intensive purposes they've said it before and will say it again. He simply responds that his testimony is true, *marturia* and *alethes*. Such a quiet, calm confidence rests upon Jesus knowing from where he has come and where he's going. Note the two: *pothen* and *pou* or as the RSV puts it, whence and wither. At the same time it's clear that the Pharisees or anyone else for that matter lack this *pothen* and *pou*. Even worse, they don't know where they are at the present. So it's a matter of being present physically but absent...totally absent...where it counts the most.

Jesus' words in the next verse which in a way form part of vs. 14 are spot on in this regard. The Pharisees are judging (*krino*) according to the flesh whereas he refrains from it. The preposition *kata* or "according to" is important since it shows the method by which *krino* is reached which in this instance is the flesh or *sarx*. This simply is another way of saying that one is uninformed when it comes to things divine. Apart from the latent conflict involved, the matter or not judging is intriguing since everyone does it. There is raised the issue and hopefully the possibility of going through life without activating this capacity. If so, one is bound to stand out.

Humanly speaking the contrast between we as persons tending to judge accord to the flesh while Jesus refrains from doing so sounds so far apart, really two different words. While true, in vs. 16 Jesus qualifies this by implying he may do so should an occasion arise. It's qualified by the tiny word *ean* or "if." The Pharisees must have wondered under what conditions Jesus would do this, *krisis* being the noun. Jesus responds by saying that whenever he does it, it is true. The basis for this? He isn't judging on his own but is aided by the Father who had sent him, *pempo* again as being dispatched or sent on a mission. And so we have two persons judging at the same time: Jesus who is right there before everyone and the Father who is never seen. Indeed, one can't help but sympathize with the Pharisees or any onlooker for not comprehending this. At the same time it comes as a tremendous relief. It's as though Jesus has lifted a huge burden off our backs allowing us to get on with life free from passing judgment. When the temptation to do so arises, let it slip away, nothing more.

In vs. 17 Jesus seeks to turn the tables on the Pharisees by referring to not just to the law (*nomos, Torah*) but with emphasis upon your law, a way of putting them on the spot. As for the law, it claims that the witness or *marturia* of two make it true, *alethes*. Jesus has in mind Dt 17.6: "On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses he that is to die shall

be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.” The situation, of course, is ominous and clearly applicable to the case at hand. However, the Pharisees and anyone else listening in are incapable of putting two and two together. To them the Father is simply pie-in-the-sky.

Vs. 18 continues as part of the previous verse where Jesus bears witness to himself along with the Father, *martureo* being used twice. The same applies to *peri* (literally ‘around’) with regard “to me” and “to myself.” Note that Jesus almost always uses the verb *pempo* or to send with it comes to his relationship with the Father.

You can’t blame the Pharisees for asking about the Father, a real mystery man, of whom Jesus had been speaking on many occasions. To them it comes across more as a cover-up or conspiracy for something Jesus doesn’t want people to know about. If they keep pressing him, it won’t be long before they and everyone else knows that Jesus is delusional. To a straight-forward question as to where this Father might be, Jesus speaks the truth which easily can be perceived not so much as a lie but a fantasy he just can’t get out of his head. If he admitted to this, the Pharisees just might let him rant on as another crackpot.

Indeed, Jesus tells it like it really is in vs. 19. The Pharisees are guilty of a double, willful ignorance: they neither know (*oida*) Jesus nor the Father. However, if they chose to know Jesus, they’d know the Father. Here knowing applies equally to two persons, one seen and the other invisible or better put, making the latter visible but not in a way that Jesus is right now. That, of course, is the sticking point and an understandable one. It seems no matter how hard Jesus tries to get the Pharisees to realize this, we see how really heavy is their blindness.

John brings to a conclusion this exchange, contentious as always, by locating it in the temple’s treasury, vs. 20 adding that it’s within the wider context of teaching or *didasko*. As for what he’s teaching, it’s identified as *rhema* which as noted earlier, refers to a thing or object compared with *logos*, word-as-expression. And so Jesus seems to be speaking on two levels, the more involved one with regard to his relationship with the Father and the other which isn’t described but most likely a simplified form. His attempt to positively influence the religious elite is a disaster from day one. Sometimes you wonder if he was aware of this. However, the person recording it or others from whom John got the information had the privilege of putting down words which stuck in their memory. As for the Pharisees who are front and center, in many ways they are secondary, agents for a greater benefit that would be passed on to the early Christian church.

Vs. 21 begins with “again” or *oun* which suggests a pause or interval of sorts, the length of which isn’t known but secondary to the narrative at hand. Nevertheless, Jesus takes up his running argument with the scribes and Pharisees, the latter being included in vs. 3 of the

RSV version. It's almost as though John doesn't want to mention them by name though they are singled out as Jews in vs. 22. What comes across throughout this chapter as well as elsewhere is that the educated religious classes are the ones who are most closed to what Jesus says. Thus being educated is not a precondition for accepting Jesus. Actually education in a strictly religious sense can be a hindrance and in a way, is a misnomer.

In vs. 21 we have two occasion of the verb *hupago* or to go away, to depart with respect to Jesus, but it's not fleshed out, just left out there almost intended to confuse those with whom Jesus is speaking. The first is in and by itself whereas the second has the scathing words that those seeking (*zeteo*) Jesus will die in their sin, the singular *hamartia* clearly in reference to a collective guilt which the Jews knew but were unable to admit to themselves. Vs. 22 follows immediately with another *oun* and a rhetorical question. The Jews simply blow right by the *hamartia* Jesus so pointedly puts forth—figuring and in a way, correctly—that he is referring to death. However, they get it wrong when supposing that he will kill himself. Despite the accusation of *hamartia* and the Jews fully realizing but afraid to admit it, they would be delighted if Jesus killed himself. Anything to get him off the scene.

In the midst of this squabbling Jesus can't help but laugh quietly to himself as well as having pity at such blindness. He makes the observation in vs. 23—and this is really laying it on thick—that the Jews are from below whereas he is from above, *kato* and *ano*. Jesus adds to this contrast similar words, that the Jews are of this world whereas he is not. In all four elements the preposition *ek* is used, “from” in the derivative sense. Here *kosmos* has a somewhat negative connotation as being opposed to the heavenly reality which is inferred.

In vs. 24 Jesus reiterates what he had just said, namely, that the Jews would die in their sins or *hamartia* plural compared to the singular in vs. 21. The only way out of this twofold death—physical and spiritual, the latter with regard to sins—is to have faith. The way Jesus puts this *pisteuo* is not in himself but using the first person singular, namely, “that I am he.” The parallel with the virtually unutterable words describing God are clear as stated in Ex 3.14: “I am who am.” In other words, present tense stand in and by itself with no reference to any attributes sublime as they may be.

This parallel with the Exodus verse goes right over the heads of the Jews, such a claim being so outlandish that it's not even on their radar screen. All they can come up with is asking “Who are you?” To this comes Jesus' no-holds-barred response which the Greek has as what I have told you from “the beginning (*arche*).” A footnote in the **RSV** renders this well as “Why do I talk to you at all?”

Jesus continues laying it on in vs. 26, that he has much to say as well as much to judge (*laleo* and *krino*) about those whom he's addressing. Not only that, the religious authorities right in front of him know it full well. Then he stops mid-sentence, if you will, and refers to

the one who had sent him as being true (*pempo* and *alethes*). So it seems that Jesus and this mysterious Father whom no one has ever seen will be involved in equal manner. In the same breath Jesus says that he declares only what he has heard from this unrevealed Father of whom he speaks of so much. Jesus gets his information, if you will, from beside or in the company of this person, the preposition *para* being used. That means Jesus had been engaged in a fairly extended period of time listening *para* him.

Also in vs. 26 Jesus declares (present tense of *laleo*) to the world or literally “into the world,” *eis* with *kosmos* even though in vs. 24 he is not of this *kosmos*. As for the declaring, it isn’t in the form of coming down hard but simply of conveying what he has heard from the Father. This is a refreshingly new approach. It’s easy as pie but requires a willingness to listen in on this Father-Son conversation. Thus the *kosmos* in and by itself is fine and will be the receptacle of Jesus hearing from the Father which means a double hearing is involved. On the surface this is Jesus speaking as a limited man to the huge world, the two being seemingly incompatible. However, the situation can’t help but bring to mind fulfillment of the psalmist’s words “yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world” [Ps 19.4].

Vs. 27 makes a depressing point which at the same time familiar. “They” or the Jews failed to understand (*ginosko*) that Jesus was speaking to them of the Father. This prompted him in the next verse to foretell an instance when they will grasp this. It’s in the context of being lifted up, *hupsoo* which also means being put in a position of honor and reverence. This is prefaced by *hotan* or “when” meaning it lies in the future and is unspecified which confuses the Jews as to what Jesus means by this...a future political victory and hence exultation? Once this *hupsoo* has taken place, the Jews will know (*ginosko*) two things: first, that “I am he” which is similar to the above mentioned correspondence to “I am who am” of Ex 3.14 cited with regard to vs. 21.

If we take *hupsoo* as the crucifixion, it indicates that indeed the Jews did not know Jesus. They remained as blinded as ever. Secondly, that Jesus does nothing on his own, that *ap’ emautou* as in 7.17 is another way of speaking of his own authority, literally “from myself.” Reference is with regard to carrying out various tasks and duties, *poieo* being the verb. However, it’s qualified by Jesus speaking which he does in accord with what the Father has taught him, *didasko*. Such teaching the Father had done in the past and now is carried into the present. Actually *didasko* transcends the limits of space and time.

Vs. 29 is joined with the one before it by the conjunctive *kai* or “and.” While the previous verse has Jesus speaking of the Father who had taught him—again, past tense—here the one or the Father responsible for both teaching and sending is described as the one who had sent Jesus and remains with him. Again, *pempo* is the verb which infers being dispatched on a mission. Thus the teaching and being-with are of two different tenses, past

and present along with the past of *pempo*. In light of this, Jesus claims not to be left alone, *aphiemi* and *monos* coming close to being abandoned. Because of this, Jesus always does what pleases the one who had sent him, the verb *poieo* with the adjective *arestos* also as acceptable, satisfactory.

So the Jews who are present obviously are taking all this in, seeing with their own eyes Jesus right there before them. Obviously he's alone physically speaking, not with anyone else who could be identified as the Father. This gives rise to a strong possibility that he's delusional. Never have they heard anyone speak like this, the Father being some kind of fantasy which Jesus had concocted. The trouble is he keeps talking about this Father and simply doesn't know when to quit. Obviously what Jesus is saying doesn't tie in with traditional Judaism. At the same time he wasn't alone with the Jews or those representatives of the religion. A whole bunch of people had been gathering around and many came to believe (*pisteuo*) literally "into him." That must have irked the Jews to no end. Note the way it's put: "as he spoke," present tense of *laleo* meaning that the people took in Jesus' words at once and without mental filters.

Vs. 31 takes up from the previous verse or where many can to believe "into" Jesus. At first glance it looks promising but quickly turns out not to be as such. Jesus starts out with a positive tone to his voice about these people continuing in his word, *meno* and *logos*. Such continuing is more along the lines of being present, of remaining, which doesn't fall exactly into the category of setting out to accomplish anything in particular. However, it does have a location, the singular *logos* of the *Logos* who is saying this. Implied is a constant awareness of all that Jesus had said about his relationship with the Father. That in and by itself is the whole package and when you consider it, a delightfully easy thing to do. The difficulty, of course, is coming to grips with the easiness involved, of learning how to do it or better, how to be it. Such makes one a disciple or *mathetes*.

Vs. 32 forms an extended sentence with the previous one joined by the conjunctive *kai* or "and" which is important because it unites the *meno* or remaining in Jesus' *logos* with knowing the truth, *ginosko* and *aletheia*. Note that the verb is in the future showing that such *ginosko* is dependent upon the *meno* just mentioned. The result of this? The truth will set you free, *eleutheroo* with the intent of shaking off domination of any kind. In sum we have *meno*→*logos*→*ginosko*→*eleutheroo* (remain→word→know→set free). And so in a real way the four words are interchangeable.

Now things quickly turn sour. Those who had started off initially enthusiastic about Jesus take offense about being set free. This was a real sore spot, for the Jews consider them free at least in the religious sense and clearly are offended. They come off with the retort that they are descendants of Abraham. That means they haven't been lorded over by anyone, the verb being *douleo* or more accurately, to be enslaved. That's partially true. Some wishful

thinking is involved because the current masters over Israel are the Romans. Thus Jesus is infringing upon their self image which despite external circumstances, is very important to maintain.

Without missing a beat, Jesus responds in vs. 34 with a double *amen* coupled with “I say to you” showing that he means business. He takes up the claim of *douleo* and shifts it from the political sense to the moral one, that is, with regard to sin or *hamartia*. That, of course, doesn’t go down well with those who initially believe in him. Jesus continues this theme of slavery or more precisely a slave or *doulos* and compares it with a son ¹. The verb *meno* or to remain applies to both as well as “into the forever,” *eis with aion* used in two different ways. To the former *meno* applies to *oikia*, house suggestive of being subject to a master. To the latter, *meno* is used but without *oikia* simply because the son doesn’t require one.

The very nature of a slave means lack of freedom, of being owned as well as being disposed to carry something out. On the other hand (cf. vs. 36), if the Son makes you free, that will be real freedom, the verb *eleutheroo* being used twice along with the adverb *ontos*, really or certainly. However, for those listening to Jesus it’s only a dream. Still, the message did take hold and grew.

In vs. 37 Jesus freely acknowledges that those showing increased hostility toward him are descendants of Abraham followed by *alla* or “but” which riles them even more because he is putting it out there for all to see that their intent is to kill him. With this is clear to everyone, it’s equally clear that his word or *logos* has no place in them, the verb *choreo* or to make room. While this infers that the Jews may be closed to Jesus’ *logos*, there exists the possibility to change things around and allow the *logos* to inhabit the person acknowledging it. Jesus concludes with making his usual recourse to the Father, that is, he speaks of what he has seen of him, *laleo* and *horaio*. Note that the preposition *para* is used inferring beside or in the company with the Father, that both he and the Son are engaged is the same seeing.

Another way of putting this is that both are looking in the same direction. Compared with this unique seeing Jesus tells the Jews flat out that they do what they’ve heard from their father, *para* being the preposition. At first it looks like he means Abraham but jumping a few verses ahead, he means something very different. However, for the moment Jesus prefers not to let on but allow them draw their own conclusion. So the Jews’ relationship with this yet-to-be-identified father is of completely different order than the one of which Jesus speaks. The **RSV** makes the distinction with capital “F” for Jesus’ Father and lower case “f” for the one of the Jews.

In vs. 39 the Jews snap back that Abraham is their father in response to Jesus inferring that his Father may be different from theirs. Thus we have what a competition of two fathers, of

¹The **RSV** uses lower case “s” (son) compared with upper case “S” (Son) in vs. 36.

two sources of the Jewish religion. Jesus doesn't accede in the slightest. While essentially acknowledging the claim just put forth, the Jews should do what Abraham had done. That is, they would have recognized Jesus and his relationship with the Father. Although Abraham was not with Moses and Elijah in Christ's transfiguration, we can assume that he was just as present though not seen.

Vs. 40 is an extended sentence of the previous verse where Jesus tells the Jews that they're out to kill him (he uses 'man' or *anthropos* here) who has spoken of the truth as he had heard from (*para*) God. Again, he brings in Abraham as someone who never would do such a thing. This is followed by more blunt words, that the Jews are doing what their father had done. And so in vs. 41 the Jews practically shout back at Jesus that they weren't born of fornication, *porneia* also as prostitution or the lack of chastity. They claim to have one Father followed immediately by God, this being the first time the Jews were put in a corner when they had to acknowledge that the God they were accustomed to worship is a Father.

In vs. 42 Jesus boldly says that God was their Father, they would love him, *agapao*. The reason is threefold, something the Jews won't accept because it involves movement outlined as follows:

- Jesus proceeded from God, *exerchomai* or to come from (*ex*).
- Jesus has come forth from God, *heko* which implies being present.
- Jesus came not of his own accord, *erchomai* or *ap' emautou*.

So the first is a simple coming from one place to another, if you will. The second is a coming but with emphasis on being present or where Jesus is at the moment. Nowadays we'd say that he has become incarnated. The third implies a certain unwillingness which gave way to consent and where *ap' emautou* as noted above several times means of his own authority. Thus Jesus agrees to be sent by his Father, *apostello* or to dispatch in the sense of to accomplish a mission. While this verb is similar to *pempo*, the latter is not as specific.

In vs. 43 adds a rhetorical question partly out of frustration where Jesus asks plainly why the Jews don't understand what he's saying, *ginosko*. While not expecting an answer, right away he posits the reason, namely, that they can't bear to hear his *logos*, *dunamai* also to be able, to be strong enough. We can sympathize with his words and do the same with the Jews, for Jesus' *logos* is preposterous in light of the religious attitudes of the day.

Jesus returns to a central issue that has been emerging now for some time, the notion of father simply because he's fond of speaking of his relationship with a mysterious, unseen entity he calls by that name. For example, in vs. 44 Jesus calls the devil the father of those Jews he's arguing with, *diabolos* which as noted earlier means one who engages in propagating slander or backbiting and fits perfectly into the situation at hand. Even worse,

those descended, at it were, from the *diabolos* have their will aligned with his and carry out his devices. This is rendered by the verb of action *poieo* also as to do with regard to *epithumia*. It means a great desire or longing emphasized by the preposition *epi* (upon) prefaced to the root *thumos* which refers to an expression of one's inner self. This misdirected intense desire-upon makes the devil a murderer or *anthropoktonos*, *kteino* being the verbal root also as to slaughter....not just that but right from the beginning or *arche*. The furthest this can be traced back is Gn 3.4: "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You shall not die.'" Just as bad if not worse is that the devil is completely devoid of the truth simply because it isn't in him (*aletheia*). This lack of truth makes the devil not just one who fosters slander but is fundamentally restless.

Vs. 44 continues with a third full sentence where Jesus speaks of the *diabolos* not just as a liar but the father of lies. He speaks in a false manner, *laleo* with *pseudos* which is his very nature rendered as "speaks from his own" or *idios*. This, plus being the father of lies (*pseudos*), ties in with the Genesis quote in the paragraph above. Jesus speaks as a firsthand witness who knows all the details implying that both he and the devil are of an order that doesn't belong to this world. To this in the next verse (45) he simply says that he's speaking the truth which the Jews don't believe, *pisteuo*.

In vs. 46 Jesus throws out two rhetorical questions. The first concerns anyone among those present who convict him of sin, *elegcho* also as to scrutinize, examine carefully. The second is more along the lines of a personal lament, of why no one believes in him because he speaks the truth. Both prompt Jesus to answer his own questions in vs. 47, that is, the person who is literally "from (*ek*) God" hears his words or *rhema*. As noted earlier, this noun means a thing or object compared with *logos*, word-as-expression. Simply put, the reason why the Jews don't hear them is that they are not "from (*ek*) God." Such hearing and from-ness are the same.

And so the back-and-forth continues, always escalating to a point where it seems it can't go further. The Jews respond in vs. 48 claiming that they are right (the adverb *kalos*) to call Jesus a Samaritan plus having a demon, *daimonion*. They call Jesus a Samaritan by reason of reports of him having been with the woman at the well plus having, associated with others from there, this considered an anathema. Jesus doesn't respond with regard to being a Samaritan but says he does not have a demon. In other words, don't mix the two. Instead, he honors his Father while the Jews are dishonoring him, *timao* and *atimazo*.

In vs. 50 Jesus says that he isn't seeking personal glory, *zeteo* and *doxa*, that making him essentially immune, if you will, from the criticism leveled against him. On the other hand, there exists one who does seek it and in doing so, will be the judge, *krino* being a verb. This "One" as the RSV puts it, is to the Jews just as mysterious as Jesus' talk about the Father, some invisible being whom they do not see.

Vs. 51 has Jesus come off with the double *amen* coupled with “I say to you,” again as a way of saying that he means business. Here it’s a matter of *tereo* in the sense of keeping guard over his *logos* which will result in not seeing death, *tereo* and *aion* with the latter and *eis*, “into eternity.” This convinces the Jews that Jesus has a demon, for again they bring up Abraham along with the prophets, that he claims to be greater than both. All have died which to them is contrary to Jesus’ claim concerning *tereo* and not seeing death and not tasting (*geuomai*) it which is more intimate and personal. And so follow the predictable but at the same time understandable accusations.

Now in vs. 54 Jesus contrasts glory and glorifying (*doxa* and *doxazo*) which is only valid if coming from the Father. However, Jesus does concede that this Father is the same God as the Jews worship. Does that help? Not in the least. It serves to make the claim of Jesus knowing the Father and the Jews not knowing him all the sharper. *Ginosko* applies to the latter as implying recognition whereas *oida* to the former implies acknowledgment and perception. If Jesus were to deny knowing as *ginosko*, he would be a liar...not just that but “like you.” That makes the Jews who had accused him of being a *diabolos* to be the very thing leveled against him.

In the second full sentence of vs. 54 Jesus uses the verb *oida* with regard to the Father which effectively equals keeping his word, *tereo* and *logos*. In other words Christ-as-Logos is applies the act of *logos*-ing, if you will, to the Father.

Jesus brings up Abraham again in vs. 56, the issue of fatherhood being a large part of what’s behind this strife between him and the Jews. He speaks of the patriarch as being alive here and now who indeed rejoices to see Jesus’ day, *agalliao* and *hemera*. The verb suggests excessive joy whereas the latter is basically equivalent to a *kairos* event and here can refer to the entire life of Jesus.

The Jews take their usual literal stance and point out the contrast in terms of *chronos* or chronological time, not the one of *kairos*. Jesus isn’t even fifty years old whereas Abraham is ancient. This leads to a bold claim if not the boldest Jesus makes when he claims to be or “I am” before Abraham came into existence. Thus we have another claim related to Ex 3.14 or “I am who am” applicable to a man. Who, then, can blame the Jews from attempting to stone Jesus? They were perfectly within their right to do this to someone who claimed to be God. And so Chapter Eight concludes with Jesus hiding himself for a while before leaving the temple, the verb *exerchomai* with the preposition *ek*, a double leaving, if you will. As for the hiding, Jesus took advantage of the Jews arguing among themselves. It was so intense that momentarily they lost sight of Jesus which presented an ideal moment to make his escape.

Chapter Nine

This entire chapter is taken up with a man born blind. As soon as we hear this, automatically there comes to mind Jesus' earlier words about being the light of the world as in 8.12 and so forth. Then, of course, enter the Gospel's favorite antagonists, the Pharisees.

The chapter begins with "As he passed by," the conjunctive *kai* usually translated as "and." Here it's rendered as "as" which serves to connect what had happened in the previous chapter with what is about to happen. *Parago* or to pass by also as to pass beside (*para*) suggests that Jesus always is in the process of moving not just from place to place but having the final goal in mind, that is, his mission which no one had yet been able to comprehend. As noted, the current chapter contains the same basic depressing under-story, if you will. You'd think by now Jesus would have tired of dealing with the Pharisees and other religious authorities. Indeed he was but despite being dogged by them at all times, he felt the need to continue. Thus the chief benefit of the Pharisees badgering Jesus serve to provide us with some of the best insights into his mission and relationship with the Father.

A man born blind caught Jesus' attention while passing by, but he doesn't give any indication of stopping to cure him. In vs. 2 his disciples sound very much like the Pharisees when asking Jesus about the source of this blindness. They address him as rabbi, saying without hesitation that it was attributed to sin, the verb *hamartano* almost casually tossed about. In other words, the blindness comes either from this man's own sin or from his parents. Of course they had in mind what we call the transmission of so-called original sin from Adam and Eve.

In vs. 3 Jesus doesn't rebuke the disciples for taking this position though secretly it must have annoyed him. For some time now they had been privy to what he had been communicating so clearly and thoroughly. You'd think this would make them come up with something better than looking for a source of condemnation based upon a man's physical defect. To this Jesus simply responds by saying that the man born blind had been put there for a specific reason, that God's works be manifest in him. The noun is *ergon* defined as that which displays itself in activity of any kind, *phaneroo* being the verb which means to become visible.

With this idea of *ergon* in mind, Jesus shifts the misdirected question by his disciples to carrying out the works of God, *ergazomai* being the verbal root and implies engaging in work that requires effort. He uses the first person plural to show that both he and the disciples have to be engaged in this activity which belongs to the one who had sent (*pempo*) Jesus. In the case at hand we have the "one," Jesus and the disciples all participating in the same *ergon*. He gives a definite sense of urgency to this, that night is

coming when one can work or *ergazomai*. Night, of course, has a broader context as well as day. Actually it's ominous as left not described which implies that once Jesus is gone, a heavy, thick darkness will manifest itself.

This talk about night and day make sense in vs. 5 when Jesus repeats the fact that he is the light of the world, *phos* and *kosmos* as in 8.12. He specifies his role as light by emphasizing the fact that it is such while he is in the world. Obviously the disciples listening to him have in mind the darkness had just mentioned. Although they may have not have not been fully aware of it at the time, Jesus intends to compare such darkness with a living example right before them, the man born blind. This man, of course, was listening intently to his words, more so than anyone endowed with sight, and hoping that Jesus would get down to business and cure him. After all, he was born as such and had no conception whatsoever of what it means to see as well as comprehend the nature of light.

Vs. 6 begins with "As he said this" where Jesus turns attention to the blind man, that he wanted to use him as a living example of what it means to go from lack of sight to being able to see the daylight. The blind man knew Jesus was about to do something, hearing him make a paste from spittle and putting it on his eyes. He was to keep this makeshift mixture on his eyes which must have dried quickly as he made his way to the pool of Siloam to wash it off. Actually he may have needed guidance, not knowing how to get there. Thus some people present must have vied to accompany the man simply to see what would happen. In this way they'd be privy to a first class miracle.

Once cured, the man returned, seeing for the first time. The text doesn't have any expressions of joy or the like, just that he could now see while some around him questioned whether or not it was the same person. The man whose name is never mentioned simply recounts what Jesus had told him. Those pressing him with all sorts of questions wanted to know who had done this and where he was, something the man did not know. After all, he had been blind when Jesus put the clay mixture on his eyes and left for the pool of Siloam. The only thing he knew about the place where Jesus came upon him was from what others had told him.

Vs. 13 opens with "they" referring to some Jews who were suspicious of this healing on the Sabbath. That's why they brought him to the Pharisees, to see if what Jesus had done was some kind of religious violation. This, of course, parallels the incident when he had cured the man on the Sabbath, he having been paralyzed for thirty-eight years (cf. 5.9). Although the text puts it in a somewhat straight-forward manner, most likely they dragged him there against his will. Still at this point they weren't quite certain it was Jesus who effected the cure but were pretty much certain. To them, no Jewish man in his right mind would do such a thing on the Sabbath. That's how entrenched they were.

The Pharisees proceeded to ask the man who had cured him, but despite their best efforts, he remains uncertain. The only thing he knew was that for the first time in his life he was able to see. The conclusion reached by the Pharisees was obvious. It should be noted that vs. 16 says “some of the Pharisees” implying that there may have been among them others such as Nicodemus and those allied with him (cf. 7.50). That could be why vs. 16 continues to say that there was a division among the Pharisees, *schisma*.

Without mentioning any names, those with a bone to pick said that the man who did the cure did not keep (*tereo*) the Sabbath and for that reason is not from God, *para* being the preposition connoting, as often noted, being beside. So those who were the most flustered turned to the man who had been cured and asked who had restored his sight. He had become incidental during this argument and for the life of him, couldn't make heads or tails of why the all the fuss. Clearly the man doesn't know, for he doesn't mention any name except blurting out in all simplicity that whoever did it was a prophet.

Between vs. 18 and vs. 34 we have what amounts to a boring account of the Pharisees asking the parents of the man who had been born blind who didn't know how he was cured, let alone the person who had cured him. They were hell-bent on accusing Jesus even though at this point they had lacked concrete information. The tragedy, of course, is the contrast between such a miracle and an apparent violation of the Sabbath. Not only is it tragic but in sense, comical. All in all, the Pharisees got so flustered at not having any satisfactory answers that in vs. 34 they screamed at the man, that he was born in utter sin, the adjective *holos* or whole. Then they continued deriding him for the audacity to teach them, simply because he was recounting the truth of the situation. And so this story ends predictably enough with the Pharisees casting the man out, *ekballo*. Though the man's parents weren't present, it'd come as no surprise that the Pharisees sent a messenger conveying pretty much the same message.

In the meanwhile Jesus had been going about his own business, most likely instructing the disciples or taking care of practical matters. When he got word of what had happened, he figured no surprise there. Still, he was curious to get more details. Any information as how to deal better with the Pharisees would come in handy. Jesus saw no need for the gory details, he being familiar with the overall pattern. Instead, he asked if the man believe literally “into (*eis*) the Son of man,” *pisteuo*. At this point the man responded in all simplicity and honestly that he hadn't a clue whom Jesus was talking about but asked to believe. This is amazing insofar as he was willing to believe in the Son of man whom he didn't know but may have had a clue as to rumors that were circulating.

Despite what boils down to nonsense, Jesus was provided with the perfect opportunity to identify himself as the Son of man after which the man immediately worshiped him, *proskuneo*. As noted earlier, the root *kuneo* means to kiss or to give reverence prefaced

with the preposition *pros*, indicative of direction towards-which. Thus it has special meaning in this poignant situation.

In vs. 39 Jesus comes off with two instances of the preposition *eis* or into: with respect to judgment and the world, *krima* and *kosmos* He puts this in terms of what the man born blind could readily understand, namely, that those who don't see may do so and those who do see become blind. *Blepo* is the verb connoting to have the faculty of sight. Jesus took special delight in speaking as such because of the man's lack of guile. Although nothing further of him in or his parents is said, it comes as no surprise that they'd be the perfect candidates to follow Jesus.

Of course, the Pharisees were ever present, hovering around Jesus like vultures. Never did they lose sight of him, especially with regard to the man who had born blind, wanting to see what either one of them would do next. In a way they were more fearful of the latter since it's a sure-fire guarantee he'd be telling everyone about what had happened. This time it seems obvious that Jesus didn't object as he is wont to do. As for the Pharisees, they asked in a sarcastic tone of voice if Jesus thought they were blind. As soon as these words came out of their mouth, they wished they hadn't spoken as such. Already they knew the response even though Jesus hadn't answered. Jesus comes back at them equating being blind with having no guilt or *hamartia* often rendered as sin. Because the Pharisees persist in saying that they see, they not only have this *hamartia* but it remains, *meno* as noted several times being akin to abiding.

Chapter Ten

This chapter opens abruptly with the double *amen* plus "I say to you," again as a sign that Jesus means business. The case at hand signals a running conflict with the Pharisees, this time pertaining to the cure of the man born blind. Jesus uses the image of a shepherd who gives his life for his sheep, a theme which runs through vs. 21 or halfway through this chapter. While admirable and despite having encountered this image a countless number of times, you can't help but wonder if in reality a shepherd would sacrifice himself like this. On the other hand, Jesus' words about sheep strike home because these animals were such a vital part of the local economy. We have here the example of a sheepfold which can be entered two ways: the regular entrance or some other means, *thura* also as entrance and *allachothēn* also as from another place. The two verbs *eiserchomai* with *eis* and *anabaino* show this contrast: to enter into or with the double *eis* and *ana* or over, above which means stealthily. The shepherd is associated with the former and the thief with the latter.

Not only does this image involve a shepherd but includes a gatekeeper or *thuroros*. He goes unidentified but let's say it's an angel stationed at the point of entry at all times. His job is

quite irregular, being at the bidding of the shepherds, that is, letting the sheep out into pasture or allowing them to return to the pen for the night. Once he does those tasks, he's free to go until the next shepherd summons his services. When you come right down to it, this *thuroros* play a truly vital role of any of the shepherds at hand.

Once the gatekeeper does the bidding of a shepherd and opens the gate, the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd under his charge. At first glance all the sheep look the same, this being more confusing with several flocks intermingled with each other. So when the shepherd wants his sheep, he calls them by name. That could mean all were trained to respond to a given name or perhaps more likely to a particular sound the others wouldn't recognize. This, of course, goes against a common presumption that by nature sheep are dumb. When he does this, the sheep come rushing toward the gate, eager to get out. Because of this the gatekeeper has to be on his toes keeping track of what could be several hundred similar looking animals making a mad dash to the gate. As for the verb to know in vs. 5, it's *oida*, not *ginosko* which implies intimate knowledge and suggests just enough awareness for the task of identification at hand.

Once the gatekeeper opens the door and the shepherd has called each sheep by a common name or sound, he goes before them with the sheep in tow. Without this it's clear that the sheep wouldn't budge. They wouldn't even think of following a stranger but instead flee from him and run as quickly as possible back into the pen. The gatekeeper would sense something is wrong as the flock rushes toward him—and sheep do run quickly when panicked—so he has the gate already open. In this way he and the shepherd work hand-in-hand. This close relationship is contrasted in vs. 5 where despite their reputed dumbness, the sheep won't follow a stranger, *alotrios* also as referring to another person. This seems true even if such a stranger tried imitating the voice of the true shepherd.

Vs. 6 sums up what Jesus had spoken of thus far, “figure” going by the name *paroimia* or a saying comprised of *oimos* or way, a strip of land prefaced with *para* or beside. This preposition is indicative of a going beside or running parallel with but not exactly copying what is being described. However, “they” or most likely the Pharisees simply didn't grasp what Jesus had said, *ginosko* in the negative. The example is so simple and straightforward you wonder what's their problem. However, “they” were so obsessed by their hatred for Jesus it made them incapable of understanding his words. This, of course, must have been intolerable at times. Only strength from his Father enabled him to continue. Even his disciples, ready to step in if and when they could, offered no real consolation.

Jesus deserves credit for willing to continue as intimidated by the opening words of vs. 7, “So Jesus again said to them,” *oun* and *palin*. In addition to showing persistence, we can detect a certain reluctance to continue. Even though he may wonder to himself if it's worth it, the second use of the double *amen* and “I say to you” show his deep-down resolve. Jesus

decides to shift the figure or *paroimia* to another image, door instead of shepherd. *Thura* is found in vs. 1 with regard to the sheepfold whereas here it's with regard to the sheep in and by themselves. This means Jesus has a more personal relationship with the sheep, even superseding the gatekeeper.

In vs. 8 Jesus distinguishes himself from those who had come before him designated as thieves and robbers, *kleptes* and *lestes*, the former also as a cheater and the latter more along the lines of a plunderer or pirate. A footnote in the **RVS** says that such language "refers to Messianic pretenders whose political ambitions men of faith did not heed." So if the people of Israel had grown accustomed to all these pretenders, Jesus stands out as unique in that he has absolutely no part with them. Despite his words, those with whom he's dealing don't believe him but for some reason or other, they continue to be fascinated by his claim.

Vs. 9 has two instances of the verb *eisrchomai*, literally to enter into. *Sozo* or to save is affiliated with the first and has the preposition *dia*, "through me." Jesus, however, doesn't specify what this *sozo* is; as time goes on it's something he hopes his listeners learn to associate with the meaning of his proper name. The second *eisrchomai* is a consequence of *sozo*, if you will, and is of a different order by reason of "through me." It stands out by reason of being united with *exerchomai*, a going from (*ex*). The result? This person will find pasture (*heurisko*) and will do so automatically. Thus *sozo* and *nome* or pasture are pretty much synonymous, the latter suggestive of grazing in a field as opposed to be penned up.

Vs. 10 speaks of two comings, *erchomai*: that of a thief or *kleptes*, *lestes* or robber as in vs. 8 not included and that of Jesus; the former coming is in the present tense whereas the latter is in the past. To the thief belongs *klepto* and *thuo* (to steal and to kill, more specifically for food) whereas to Jesus belongs providing not just life (*zoe*) but life in abundance, *perissos*.

Jesus shifts from being the door in vs. 9 to being the good shepherd in vs. 11, *kalos* having a broader meaning as in the sense of beautiful and wholesome. He manifests this *kalos* nature in a willingness to literally place his soul for his sheep, *tithemi* and *psuche*. He stands in sharp contrast to someone who is hired to watch over a flock. Should a wolf approach, that person abandons the flock and makes a run for it, thereby allowing the wolf to have free reign.

After restating himself as the shepherd who is *kalos*, in vs. 14 Jesus says there's a mutual knowing or *ginosko* between him and his flock. Such knowing mirrors the one between the Father and Jesus and elevates it to a whole new level. It is precisely this *ginosko* relative to the Father that sets Jesus apart as a "beautiful" shepherd compared with the thieves and robbers of vs. 8. Not only does Jesus lay down his life for the sheep, he has others not

belonging to the fold. He must also bring them (*ago*, also to lead, carry) them. Although Jesus doesn't identify them, it's easy to tell they are the Gentiles by reason of having contrasted them with "my own" in vs. 14. Vs. 16 continues with a second sentence where Jesus says that in the future there will be one flock and one shepherd.

Vs. 17 begins with the phrase *dia touto* literally as "through this" where Jesus speaks of why the Father loves (*agapao*) him, that is, because he literally "places his (i.e., 'my') soul," *tithemi* and *psuche*, as in vs. 9. Here the verb is used as laying down. This is countered by Jesus also having the capacity to take it up again, *lambano* and *palin*. As for this *psuche* or Jesus' very soul, note a phrase and a noun with essentially the same meaning but with different nuances. Both pertain to authority, *ap' emautou* and *exousia*. The former as here and in 7.17 means literally "from myself;" That is, such authority is more personal and direct as pertaining to Jesus Christ. As for the latter, here and in 5.27 it's a bit more abstract and pertains to control or governing. Both are a charge or *entole* also as commandment as well as mandate which comes from besides (*para*) the Father.

The next three verses (vss. 19-21) pertain to the Jews. Mere mention of that word (a.k.a. Pharisees) suffices in and by itself to know what's involved, given their track record thus far.

Vs. 19 puts it well, the noun *schisma* or division as in 9.16 and more along the lines of a deep cleft with regard to Jesus' words or *logos*. *Palin* or again serves to re-enforce this division along with the preposition *en*, literally "in the Jews." The next two verses represent two camps, *polloi* or many and *alloi* or others. The first claims that Jesus has a demon or *daimonion*, nothing new there. Not only that, but he is mad, *mainomai* also to be out of one's mind which makes the Jews exclaim why bother listening to him? Yet despite these claims, those making the accusation indeed are paying very close attention to Jesus.

The second group or *alloi*—in vs. 21 which again brings up the possibility of Nicodemus belonging to it—say that Jesus' *rhema* couldn't possibly come from a demon. Such a being cannot cure a man born blind from birth. Note that *rhema* here is translated as "sayings" which contrasts well with the *logoi* of Jesus in the verse before.

Vs. 22 sets the stage for the remaining half of Chapter Ten, the feast of the Dedication² which takes place at Jerusalem, *Egkainia* fundamentally meaning renewal. The significance of this feast as being the last major deliverance experienced by the Jews as well as winter being the season has a certain finality about it. We can include the fact that Jesus was walking in Solomon's portico which, along with the city, will be destroyed by the Romans in the not distant future. In this somewhat somber context the Jews gather around Jesus, *kukloo* having an ominous sense about it. Chances are they were a mixed group, some

² Feast of Dedication was instituted by Judas Maccabeus in December 165 B.C. after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes.

who've been with Jesus earlier and others who are newcomers. Once having gathered around him, they ask how long he will keep them in suspense as to whether or not he is the Christ. This is rendered literally and vividly as "how long are you lifting the soul (*psuche*) of us?" Note the singular *psuche* and the plural "us," indicative of being of one mind and intent. While surrounded, in a way, Jesus has them right where he wants them.

Even though he's pretty much bored and tired with these religious authorities, vs. 25 reflects Jesus' attitude in the simple words "I told you" followed by the fact that the Jews haven't believed (*pisteuo*). That is to say, they haven't believed in the works that Jesus is doing in the name of his Father, *ergon* most likely referring to the healing of the man who had been born blind. Regardless of their belief, such *ergon* (in the plural) give testimony concerning Jesus, *martureo*. As for the lack of belief, that's part and parcel of not belonging to Jesus' sheep.

In vs. 27 Jesus repeats the fact that the sheep hear his voice which effects two results, if you will. He knows (*ginosko*) them and they following him at once. Such following or *akoloutheo* as used frequently results in having life which is eternal, *zoe* and *aiionios*. Jesus emphasizes this by saying that the sheep never will perish, *apollumi* implying utter destruction. Equivalent to this is the fact that no one will snatch the sheep from his hand, *harpazo* conveying the sense of suddenness, of being taken by complete surprise.

As for this image of a hand, a second one exists as belonging to the Father whom Jesus says is greater than all which doesn't necessarily include himself, "all" most likely referring to created beings. Just like with Jesus, no one can snatch (*harpazo*) from the Father's hand. This distinction of hands is reconciled by Jesus and the Father being one. Thus the two hands are a sign of being safe, actually safer than one could imagine. Actually *harpazo* has a certain dread about it, resulting in swift and total retaliation.

The response to this from the Jews, a.k.a. Pharisees? In vs. 31 they're on the verge of stoning Jesus again or *palin* which refers to a similar incident at the conclusion of Chapter Eight. That occasion was Jesus claiming to exist before Abraham. While both are considered heresies, very understandable in light of religious beliefs of the time, the former is worse because Jesus puts himself on the same plane as the Lord. Jesus says that this violent response is because of the good works (*ergon* modified by *kalos*) he had done to which the Jews respond that no, the issue at hand is blasphemy, *blasphemia* or disrespect, slander when it comes to things divine. This consists in Jesus-as-man making himself to be Jesus-as-God.

Here Jesus has an opportunity to come off with a retort, one that fits perfectly. He throws at the Jews a quote from the Law (*nomos* and *Torah*) which isn't that source technically speaking but from Ps 82.6 which runs in full as "I say, 'You are gods, sons of the Most High,

all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like men and fall like any prince.” Jesus doesn’t quote the second half of this verse. Not only that, his adversaries are fully aware of the verse at hand in full. The key word is *‘aken* translated as “nevertheless. Despite calling human being gods, they will perish. Princes are included which infers the religious establishment, their fall being a direct result of their inability to listen to Jesus. Actually the whole tenor of the psalm is intimidating for these people.

In vs. 35 Jesus qualifies the psalm verse just cited, gods being those to whom the *logos* of God came which is followed by the interjection that scripture cannot literally be loosened (*luo*). He then proceeds with the second part of this extended sentence by adopting rhetorical tone. That is, do they have the right to say that Jesus is blaspheming (*blasphemeo*, to speak against God) because he claims to be Son of God? After all, it’s the Father who had both consecrated and sent Jesus into the world, *hagiazō* and *apostello*³. The former implies setting aside and the latter, dispatching with the intent of achieving an objective.

Next Jesus levels with those accusing him by saying that if he isn’t doing the works or *ergon* of his Father, go right ahead. Feel free not to believe in him, *pisteuo*. They may continue as such but at least believe in the works he had done which are out there for anyone to behold. Nevertheless, Jesus insists on saying that the Jews he’s addressing should both know and understand that the Father is in him and he is in the Father, the verb *ginosko* being used twice. Note that following these word we have *palin* or “again” when the Jews tried to arrest him. *Palin* serves to show persistence on the part of the Jews to do Jesus in. However, Jesus literally “goes out (*exerchomai*) from their hands.” How he doesn’t isn’t explained but left to our imagination.

As if to regroup before continuing with his mission, Jesus returns to where John had done his baptizing. The verb is *aperchomai* with *palin*, that is, he went away again. *Palin* or again here suggests that such near-escapes are not that uncommon. There Jesus remained, *meno* implying that he spend some time both brooding over and reassessing his mission. Not only did he think of John but his pondered over own baptism and immediate withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days and nights. The places was filled with ghosts of the past, that is, memories of so many people whom John had baptized. Where are they now? That’s a question that must have passed through Jesus’ mind quite often. This now deserted area also served as an occasion for Jesus to measure his work against his cousin’s, the one who had proclaimed not that long ago, “Behold, the lamb of God” [1.20].

Despite this withdrawal intended as a time for reflection, many people followed him. That means they must have been listening in on Jesus debating with the religious authorities and

³ Compare with the above mentioned *pempo*, also to send. It connotes something similar but with emphasis upon giving a communication.

decided then and there that what he said had a definite ring of truth about it. They didn't expect Jesus to baptize as John had done but recognized that what John had said about Jesus was true even though John did no sign or *semeion*. In a way, this isn't quite true because John himself was a *semeion*.

Meanwhile, the Jews who had just debated with Jesus watched with envy as the people left and followed Jesus. They were left standing there with no one paying attention to them despite them being the legitimate religious establishment. Those who went with Jesus believed literally "into (*eis*) him," *pisteuo*. Chances are that some of the Baptist's disciples got wind of where Jesus was going and decided to tag along. For them it would be a painful but necessary visit. Though the text doesn't say what happened at the Jordan River, surely Jesus must have been moved to speak about John and his relationship with him.

Chapter Eleven

This is a lengthy chapter dealing with the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the **RSV** having a footnote of this momentous event which sums it up nicely, "the crowning miracle or sign revealing Jesus as the giver of life (5.25-29) and precipitating his death (11.53)."

The first words of chapter Eleven have a kind of story-like quality suitable for the occasion: "Now a certain man was (*hen de* literally, 'was yet') ill," introducing Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, for the first time. It's as though he jumped from obscurity by the fact of his death and subsequent resurrection. If it weren't for the incident at hand, Lazarus would possibly not be mentioned in this Gospel. Martha is another friend who makes her appearance for the first time; the same with her sister Mary As recounted in 12.3 when she anoints Jesus' feet. Chances are all three knew John the Baptist and understood why Jesus had gone to the Jordan. They knew he had to be apart and commune with his cousin if you will, as well as recall his forty days in the wilderness immediately after having been baptized. As for the apostles, it'd come as no surprise that Martha, Mary and Lazarus were respectful but cool towards them, perhaps taking Jesus aside and asking why he had chosen to associate with such a motley group. This is pretty much what Jesus' mother had done at the wedding of Cana.

As for Lazarus, Martha and Mary sent for Jesus, *apostello* with *pros*, the latter indicative or direction towards-which with the message saying simply that he is ill. The verb is *astheneo*, usually applicable to a debilitating condition. The two sisters don't reveal any desperation on their part by rushing up and pressuring Jesus to cure him. As for his location, the text is silent. The same with regard to why Jesus is apparently delaying which can't but help make you wonder why he doesn't hasten to his dear friends. That's something initially bothersome but becomes clearer as the text advances. Nevertheless, clearly Jesus loves

Lazarus, the verb at hand being *phileo* or to show affection as one would with a friend. In a very real way this is more intimate than the verb *agapao* as in 10.17.

The small, two letter word *de* translated as “but” beginning vs. 4 introduces how Jesus responds...not with an immediate outpouring of concern nor getting all panicky to his disciples saying that they must drop everything and run. Rather, he takes the news about Lazarus in stride and reflects upon it in order to show those whom he loved how he will deal with his illness. As for what Jesus was doing when the news reached him, nothing is said.

Immediately Jesus said that the *astheneia* of Lazarus isn't to (*pros*) death but for God's glory, *doxa* with *huper* also on behalf of. Even these words given to the messenger or messengers from the two sisters foretell the raising of Lazarus from the dead. While uttering them, Jesus knew he would undergo death in the very near future. Note that the *doxa* or glory as belonging to God is joined with the verb *doxazo* or the act...present giving...of glory for the Son of God. The phrase “through it” or *di' autes* is added not for effect but to show where this *doxa* really belongs.

De begins vs. 5 translated as “now” and is countered by *hos* or “so when” beginning vs. 6. In other words, it sets up a contrast between *agapao* and *akouo*, to love and to hear. The first is with respect to Jesus loving Martha, her sister and Lazarus, *agapao*. The second is with respect to him hearing about Lazarus being ill. Note that Mary's name isn't mentioned properly. The interesting thing about having heard of Lazarus' condition, Jesus decides to stay where he was for two extra days. It's as though this news kept him there without giving a reason. The news had the opposite effect which must have stunned the messengers. Those with whom Jesus was staying—and let's assume it was his disciples or with those whom he might have been teaching or healing—they dare not say anything upon hearing the same news. It may have struck them as being insensitive, but they dare not saying anything. The reason for such apparent indifference is obvious: they weren't privy to the same insight Jesus had, that he was waiting for Lazarus to die so that the divine *doxa/doxazo* would become manifest.

In vs. 7 Jesus bids his disciples to return to Judea, Bethany being inferred but doesn't seem to let on that Lazarus will deathly ill. This verse infers that Jesus was in the same place where John was baptizing, a full day's walk to Bethany. Immediately upon hearing this, his disciples caution him about the Jews who still were on the lookout to stone him. While they had genuine concern for their master, primarily they were concerned about themselves because their lives will be endangered though they wouldn't express it as such.

Jesus could see right through this and brings up a favorite theme of his, light vs. the night. He does so by posing two rhetorical questions which in essence are one, that is, with regard

to the daylight hours as the time to walk about and the night which causes stumbling. The two verbs are *peripateo* and *proskopto* which are prefaced with two prepositions. The first literally means to walk around (*peri*) and the second to strike in a specific direction as signified by *pros*. With regard to the former, Jesus says it's tied in with seeing the light of the world, *phos* and *kosmos* which suggests seeing him as such. With regard to the latter, a person falls down hard because the light (i.e., Jesus) is not in him.

Vs. 11 begins literally as "These he spoke" pertaining to day and night followed by Jesus informing his disciples that Lazarus has fallen asleep, *koimao* also as to pass away, to die. Then Jesus adds almost casually that he has to go and awaken him from this sleep, *exupnizo*, the preposition *ex* or from adding a sense of urgency. Not only does he call Lazarus a friend or *philos* but our friend meaning, of course, that he and his two sisters are known by the twelve disciples through their association with Jesus. Even though the situation at hand is a grave one, it has the benefit of showing Jesus' relationship with dear friends instead of his usual, often boring as well as contentious relationship with people, disciples included. Again, all this seems to have taken place by the Jordan River when John had been baptizing. Word had reached him and him alone most likely by a close friend of Martha and Mary which meant a full day's journey both to there as well as to Bethany.

The next few verses run one after another in rapid succession. They begin with the disciples in vs. 12 misinterpreting Jesus' words about Lazarus falling asleep, that he will recover, *sozo* also to be saved from the illness afflicting him. Vs. 13 states the misinterpretation followed in the next verse by Jesus telling them plainly that Lazarus is dead. Then in vs. 15 which is part of the previous verse he says somewhat cryptically (actually everything he says leading up to the raising of Lazarus is couched in cryptic language) that he's glad for not having been with Lazarus and his two sisters. *Chairo* is a fairly strong way of putting it because this verb also mean to rejoice. If Jesus had been present, the disciples wouldn't have believed (*pisteuo*) in him. In sum, the disciples hadn't a clue as to what he is talking about, this puzzlement being followed by Jesus saying in the very next breath, "But let us go to him." Such words suggest that Lazarus is alive or if dead, soon he will return to life. To the disciples' credit, they did go despite their hesitation expressed when they warned him about the Jews' attempt to stone him.

This rapid-fire series of five verses comes to a conclusion in vs. 16 when Thomas called *Didumos* (the Twin) takes the initiative by addressing his fellow disciples who clearly expressed reservation to comply. He tells them not only to go with Jesus but to do so in order to die. Thomas grasped the potential for Jesus to be stoned, thought that would an admirable way to give witness. However, in reality he would have been one of the first to chicken out. There's no reaction from the disciples. Their silence spoke volumes. The same applied to Jesus. The best approach was simply to let Thomas be Thomas.

Vs. 17 has Jesus arriving in Bethany to find that Lazarus has been dead and buried four days. Although he couldn't reveal it at this juncture, everything was working according to plan. The day's walk from the Jordan River to Bethany must have been quite tense with the apostles having been riled by Thomas. However, as they drew closer to their destination, they must have gotten cold feet and were very much on edge. Lazarus, along with Martha and Mary, seems to have been well liked by many people. Jews came to Bethany from nearby Jerusalem to offer their condolences to the two sisters who seem not ever to have married. As for giving consolation, the verb is *paramutheomai*, the root meaning to tell or recount prefaced with the preposition *para* or beside, in the vicinity of.

When Martha gets word that Jesus is coming, she went out to meet him, *hupantao* consisting of the root *antao*, to come opposite to prefaced with the preposition *hupo* or under. I.e., it suggests more a rushing out. Apparently friends were stationed to keep watch for Jesus approaching, and when they saw him from afar, at once they notified Martha. On the other hand, Mary sat in the house, *kathizo* more along the lines of sitting down. *Kathizo* here is for emphasis, Mary mirroring in a way the same attitude of Jesus with his delay before he arrived. Mary simply saw no need to rush out to meet Jesus who would arrive in due time. Besides, what was the rush? Lazarus was dead, so a little more time wouldn't affect a thing.

In vs. 21 Martha wastes no time with Jesus, pretty much rebuking him for having not come sooner. We can assume this took place some distance from the house, Jesus being chewed out and taking it all in as the two made their way home. While it's somewhat presumptuous, her words reveal that indeed she has faith in Jesus' ability to cure a friend who is desperately ill. She continues stating this trust in the next verse by saying confidently that she knows (*oida*) that whatever Jesus asks from God, he will obtain it, *aiteo* connoting the making of a demand. Jesus reassures her that her brother will rise but leaves it at that, giving no time frame. It's as though he wants to know where Martha stands on this expectation and right away she responds almost as on cue that Lazarus indeed will rise but only on the last day, *eschatos* suggestive of that which is the very end.

Now in vs. 25 Jesus says outrightly that he is both the resurrection and the life, *anastasis* and *zoe* and continues elaborating this for the next two verses. Until this point Jesus hadn't identified himself as *anastasis* though certainly he spoke of it. As for *zoe*, he alludes to it in 6.35, "I am the bread of life." Anyone who believes literally into (*pisteuo* with *eis*) him will live even though he must go through the experience of dying. And so this into-ness with regard to faith is of supreme importance. *Eis* is applicable to *aion* or forever, literally "into forever." Nothing could be plainer than these words. To them Martha responds in a matter-of-fact way, that her friend Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Although she, his sister and brother had known Jesus for some time, chances are this never came up. It was simply too

much, but now the death of Lazarus makes it more pertinent. All the while Mary was sitting (*kathizo*) while knowing from a distance, if you will, what Jesus was telling her sister.

Vs. 28 has Martha going to her sister Mary sitting in the house, oblivious to the fact that she knows pretty much what Jesus had told her if not more. Martha picks up on this, for after all they are sisters, and uses the former title *Didaskalos* or Teacher with regard to Jesus. He is present and is calling for her. Note that she does this quietly, *lathra* also as secretly possibly not to let on to the Jews hovering about. *Paristemi* as to be present consists of the root *histemi* or to stand prefaced with *para* which here is to stand beside or in the presence of. As for Jesus calling for Mary, *phoneo* is the verb, also as to speak loudly and clearly. Martha was being her usual Martha self without realizing that her sister had, if you will, Jesus already *parahistemi* with her as she was sitting in the house. Thus we have Martha going this way and that while Mary is stationary.

Upon hearing that Jesus was near, Mary rose at once (*tachu*) and went to Jesus, *pros* being pretty much the same as *tachu*. This suggests that although Mary was sitting in the house, she was ready for action like a trap waiting to spring. Vs. 30 reveals that Jesus hadn't entered Bethany but was at a place where Martha had rushed out to greet Jesus. It seems this place is different from where Jesus had been at the Jordan River, that is, closer to Bethany but still some distance away and that a friend or family member had been stationed on the road to give warning of Jesus' approach.

All this didn't take place in isolation. Vs. 31 mentions an undisclosed number of people simply called Jews who were with Martha consoling her in her house, *paramutheomai*. It took place once she had returned from being with Jesus as inferred by the words "When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary." Implied is that the Jews didn't bother much with her sister Mary who to them seemed a bit strange by reason of her not making a big fuss over the death of her brother. However, when they saw her rise quickly, they followed right on her heels. This may seem like an intrusion into one's privacy, but given the closely knit society of the time, it's something completely normal and in fact, expected.

Indeed, Mary knew something those with her didn't and were curious to discover what it was. That must have astonished Martha who isn't mentioned staying at home and watching these visitors tagging along with Mary whom they thought would also go to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. However, it didn't turn out to be as such. Being practical by nature, Martha figured it'd be a waste of time. Her staying at home is parallel but different from Mary's *kathizo* or sitting there as in vs. 20. For Martha, better to stay and prepare a meal for Jesus who would be knocking at her door very soon.

Vs. 32 has Mary coming to the place where Jesus was, this being somewhat odd and mentioned several times already. It's odd, at least initially, because Jesus loved Martha, Mary

and Lazarus very much. Furthermore, the text says nothing as to its location nor distance from where the two sisters had their home. Again, it's important to keep in mind that they are among the very few characters in the Gospels whom Jesus didn't have to relate to as a teacher, healer or as something in authority. With them he could simply be himself, even though most of the time he spent with his disciples, they had little knowledge of what he was about.

Now in vs. 32 Mary comes close to falling apart. She kneels at Jesus' feet barely able to contain herself yet rebuking him by saying that if he had come earlier Lazarus wouldn't have died. She rubs it in by calling Lazarus "my brother." Such was Mary's response. And the Jews? After all, the disciples strongly counseled Jesus not to go to Bethany (cf. vs. 8) because the Jews sought to stone him. So when these Jews saw Jesus, they were taken aback that he dare show his face even though he was close to the two sisters and their brother. They figured better leave things as they are at least for now.

Jesus clearly was moved by the weeping both of Mary and the Jews, *embrimaomai* meaning to feel strong about something. It fits the context along with this verb situated in the spirit or *pneuma* as well as being troubled, *tarasso*. Any hostility between Jesus and the Jews dissolved, at least temporarily, which shows the positive influence the two sisters and Lazarus must have exerted without any fanfare. The Jews were fully aware of this family's close relationship with Jesus and didn't dare interfere with it.

Now this group made their way to Lazarus' tomb at the request of Jesus. En route the Jews couldn't help but notice how much Jesus had loved him, exclaiming this aloud with *phileo* being consistent with the friendship involved. Then some, presumably those most intent on doing in Jesus, made the snide remark that yes, he opened the eyes of the blind but didn't prevent the death of Lazarus.

Vs. 38 has another mention of the verb *embrimaomai* when Jesus came to the tomb, rather, a cave with a stone in front it which resembles the same one in which he would lay. Perhaps that addition was deliberate on John's part as a setup to what Jesus was about to do. Jesus ordered that the stone be removed during which Martha intervenes, she being described for dramatic effect, if you will, as the sister of the dead man, *teleutao* being the verb which fundamentally means to come to an end. The same effect applies with regard to her cautious remark that Lazarus would give off an odor after being in the tomb for four days.

In vs. 40 Jesus wastes no time in returning Mary's rebuke with one of his own. He reminds her of what he had said earlier in vs. 4, "This sickness will not end in death," that the Son of God may be glorified. If Mary had faith in Jesus (*pisteuo*), she would see God's glory or *doxa* which is right smack in front of her. All this must have been tiring for Jesus. He had to repeat himself so often and in a way was disappointed that Mary, a dear friend along with

her sister, failed to grasp what he was about. However, at this juncture the two sisters seem to have fared better than most if not all their contemporaries. That's why they ordered the stone to Lazarus' tomb be removed. Now the stage was set for Jesus to do something everyone knew would happen, because you don't open a tomb for the fun of it.

For dramatic effect in vs. 41 the stone is removed after which Jesus raises his eyes as toward heaven and addresses his Father, giving thanks for already having heard him, the two verbs being *eucharisteo* and *akouo*. Interpretation, if you will? That essentially the deed is done, that Lazarus has been raised. In the next breath Jesus qualifies his *eucharisteo*, if you will, by speaking aloud for the benefit of those within hearing distance. Surely what some of the Jews were about to hear is familiar. They had heard it before and privately exclaimed, "not again." In this situation Jesus is speaking as such that those nearby may believe that the Father had sent him, *pisteuo* and *apostello*. While his words went over the heads of all present, gratefully someone had recalled or recorded them which over time continue to have a more lasting an impact than the raising of Lazarus. After all, such a raising was not permanent; Lazarus was destined to die a second time, the one and only instance in history.

Now for the part everyone was waiting for. In vs. 43 he cries out in a large (*megalos*, also as great) voice bidding Lazarus to come forth from the tomb. The verb is *kraugazo* which is more along the lines of giving a loud, even harsh shout at top of one's voice. There must have been a pause of a minute or two before Lazarus responded. Everyone was standing with bated breath waiting for him to come out all wrapped in burial apparatus which obviously was a frightful sight to behold. Jesus bids those nearby somewhat tongue-in-cheek to remove all the burial gear from Lazarus. That must have taken some time while Lazarus just stood there unable yet to speak.

As for what happens next, nothing. Once freed, people were afraid to approach Lazarus. What would they ask him? Here's someone who had actually died and who actually had returned to physical life. All that is left unanswered, deliberately so. From then on Lazarus pretty much disappears except for a brief mention in the next chapter. By reason of being a close friend of Jesus, we can assume that he followed his arrest, crucifixion, burial and resurrection with special interest. It was as though all that were happening to him. If the two had met after the resurrection, it must have been the conversation of all ages, to be sure.

Vs. 45 mentions that many of the Jews who were present "believed into Jesus," *pisteuo* with *eis*. As to be expected, some rushed off to the Pharisees in nearby Jerusalem and gave an account of the recent dramatic event. Right away they, along with the priests, convened a counsel as what to do with Jesus. Although they acknowledged that he has done many signs or *semeion*, they don't mention the most dramatic one of them all which just took place. Obviously they knew about it but literally removed it from their minds. Now they revealed

their true colors which objectively is understandable. They feared the Romans who'd get word of all this and destroy the place as well as the nation of Israel. Note that *topos* for place is used in and by itself, obviously the temple.

Vs. 49 speaks of Caiaphas, the high priest who's put somewhat derisively as "one of them." He snaps back at those who had approached him, claiming that they know (*oida*) nothing at all nor do they understand (*logizomai*, also to reckon) that it's expedient for one man to die for the people. This, in his mind, would prevent the nation of Israel from perishing, *apollumi* implying utter destruction. Caiaphas is shrewd here but in effect is averting himself from the problem at hand. Apart from Jesus being guilty or not, the real issue in his opinion is to maintain that delicate balance of power with Rome. He uses the verb *sumphero*, to be profitable, literally to carry with and ties it in with those who had approached him. Vs. 51 observes that Caiaphas hadn't a clue as to what he was saying and expresses this by *aph' heautou* or "from himself;" that he's acting without realizing it as a kind of divine mouthpiece. This, of course, is with regard to Jesus dying not just for Israel but to gather God's children who are scattered outside Israel, the diaspora. The verb for this is *diaskorpizo*, the preposition *dia* or through added for emphasis.

Upon hearing from Caiaphas and listening to his advice, everyone present concurred with him, *bouleuo* also as to reach a conclusion about a course of action. Apparently word of this reached Jesus through contacts with the religious authorities, perhaps through Nicodemus or one of his allies. Now he exercises greater caution by not going out and about openly described by the noun *parresia* fundamentally as freedom of speech. Now Jesus withdraws quietly with his disciples to a town called Ephraim. While there they must have had a genuinely heated discussion beginning with Lazarus and the problem which never goes away, how to deal with the religious authorities.

The events of Chapter Eleven are in preparation for the coming Passover, the last one Jesus would celebrate. Note that it's described as "of the Jews" which can come across as somewhat negative compared to what the ministry of Jesus Christ represents. The Pharisees and priests were on the look out for Jesus, of course, knowing he wouldn't miss being present in Jerusalem. They kept special watch around the temple area, a favorite spot where Jesus liked to teach. Orders went out publicly that if anyone spotted Jesus or knew his whereabouts, they should give word. There's nothing about a reward, but we can presume one was offered. Such is the situation prior to Jesus' arrest which he had known about and informed his disciples on numerous occasions. Still, they found it difficult to believe.

Chapter Twelve

Along with its opening words literally as to the Passover, clearly the stage is set for the final events in the life of Jesus Christ. He had just performed the greatest miracle of them all, having raised Lazarus from the dead. A preview of this, if you will, is found in 11:55: "Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand." We can assume that throughout these days Jesus had in mind Lazarus, a preview, if you will, of his own resurrection. That too must have been in Lazarus' mind. While the text is silent on the matter, we can assume he gained some insight into this during the time he had been dead. Yes, Jesus would have to undergo suffering but in the end will triumph.

Keeping in line with what was just said, Jesus can't help but return to Bethany, a safe haven. We have no word as to where he had stayed in the interim period. The concluding verses of Chapter Eleven show that the hostility toward Jesus is close to reaching its peak, something of which he was keenly aware. In a time like this, best to find comfort among trusted friends, Martha, Mary and of course, Lazarus. Although the disciples accompanied him and were with him 7-24, they did not share the same intimate relationship with him. In fact, they were jealous. On the other hand, we can be sure that not much later or after Pentecost they sought out these three to gain better insight into the close relationship they had enjoyed with Jesus. The three, in turn, must have joined the incipient Christian community and were an integral part of it. Again, no record but all this is left to our imagination.

Jesus must have come later in the day to Bethany because vs. 2 says that "they" made him supper. This time all three were engaged, not just Martha. They couldn't do enough for their friend, so they must have thrown out quite a spread. This verse, of course, singles out Lazarus who "was one of those at table with him." These words suggest that a few close friends also were present. It seems his arrival was unannounced. However, the three knew for sure that the religious authorities were hot on his tail and gladly took him in. Although the previous chapter says that Jews had come out from nearby Jerusalem to console the two sisters over their brother's death, nevertheless they too were under the gun and therefore suspicious.

In vs. 3 Mary pours out a pound of pure nard ointment described as costly or *polutimos* with the adjective *polus* (much, many) prefaced to the root *timios* meaning held in honor. Thus the nard which is *pistikos* (genuine, also as faithful) is exceptional. Chances are it's some left over and held in reserve when Lazarus was anointed for burial. Then Mary proceeds to wipe Jesus' feet with her hair about which the NIV remarks: "a respectful woman did not unbind her hair in public." In other words, Mary through all caution to the winds and understandably so since Jesus had just raised her brother from the dead. During gesture which can be described only as an extravagant splurge, the entire house was filled with the scent of nard. Since it could have been used on Lazarus as just noted, those present, including Jesus, could not but help see the significance in what Mary was doing.

While the distinctive scent of nard did permeate the entire household, it didn't do the same with one person who was present. That was Judas Iscariot simply noted as the one who would betray him. Everyone knew that something unusual...ominous...was going on but couldn't quite put their finger on it, the exception, of course, being Jesus. Thus Judas remained odorless for the next few days or until his suicide. Only one not so permeated by the nard could ask why such extravagance along with the lame excuse that the ointment could have been sold on behalf of the poor. Everyone was astonished at this response by the unanointed one in their midst.

While this may not be exactly applicable, consider the ninth or next-to-last plague of the Egyptians. That consisted of a darkness so thick it could be felt (cf. Ex 11.21). However, "all the people of Israel had light where they dwelt" [vs. 23]. This very sharp distinction between ultra-thick darkness and light is the inverse of the nard that filled the house except for Judas. The distinction between all present and him was so pronounced, you could feel the difference.

Vs. 6 says outrightly that Judas wasn't a bit concerned about the poor, he being a thief and ironically having charge of the disciples' general expenses. Apparently people had suspicions about this but weren't quite sure until Judas opened his mouth. It was the lack of nard resting upon him that was the giveaway. Jesus gave the only response that could be given. Judas is to leave Mary alone to do her thing. Then he adds that she should keep what was left over of the nard for his burial. Thus we have two burials close together, that of Lazarus and that of Jesus or a separation of about one week. Jesus brings this awkward interjection by Judas to a resolution by saying that the poor are always present compared with him. Thus we have two instances of *pantote* or "always:" the poor now and Jesus not with the same type of now-ness (*pan* = all and *tote* = now).

People were beginning to stream to Jerusalem for celebration of the coming Passover. So when vs. 9 says a great crowd (*ochlos*) of Jews had discovered that Jesus was present at Bethany visiting his friends, many hastened out there to see Lazarus. Everyone knew that Jesus was responsible for him to have risen from the dead. Would he be doing a repeat performance to someone else? Besides, who wouldn't want to sit down and have a discussion with Lazarus? We all know the fundamental question they'd put to him. We'd do the same. In general, what did he experience, if anything, when he was dead? Did he see God, angels or demons? Will he live on forever and will face another death? After all, Lazarus is the only person in the history of the world destined to experience death twice.

Among the *ochlos* streaming again to Bethany—those coming to Jerusalem for the Passover must have wondered why this was so instead of remaining inside the city—were agents of the chief priests seeking an occasion to put Jesus to death. Note that they weren't seeking the same for Lazarus. They figured that if Lazarus is out of the way, Jesus might decide to

resurrect him a second time which on their part is foolish thinking. The real issue is that a lot of people were believing literally “into (*eis*) Jesus.”

Without a doubt, the Roman authorities must have gotten word of all this and sent out their agents as well to keep an eye on Jesus. However, they came away with nothing except noting what they considered an internal quarrel over nothing.

Vs. 12 again brings up “a great crowd” or *ochlos* (cf. vs. 9, ‘of Jews’) having come to Jerusalem for the Passover here described as a feast or *heorte*. They got word that Jesus would be coming as well. It was only natural for him to do so, Bethany being so close to the capital. While he had accumulated a certain reputation during the past several years, having raised Lazarus really put him on the map. We can be certain that Lazarus along with Martha and Mary were in attendance for this, the holiest feast of them all, but attended incognito to avoid the crowds. Actually it now must have been very difficult for all three to live their lives in a normal manner.

Vs. 12 heralds what has become known as Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, with the *ochlos* spontaneously assembling to meet Jesus. As a token of their recognition they cut down palm branches or *phoinix*. By reason of their feather-shaped fronds, they resemble the mythical bird phoenix. The symbolism here is obvious. The phoenix bird died in fire after which it rose anew. And so the crowd cried out in rapturous joy, *Hosanna* which reads literally as “Save, I pray,” *na* indicative of this wish. As for the words of this exclamation, it’s based upon Ps 118.25-26 which consists of four short sentences and reads in full as “Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success! Blessed be he who enters in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord.” As a side note, the verb *yasah* or to save is the root for the proper name Jesus. It’s almost as though the cry read “Jesus-us, we beseech you!” Such cries alternated with proclaiming Jesus as the king of Israel, that, of course, setting off alarm bells big time with regard to both the Jewish authorities and the Romans. The timing couldn’t have been worse for such seditious activity, Passover.

The above mentioned proclamation and adulation seem to take place before Jesus enters Jerusalem though it doesn’t preclude that it continued. He seats himself upon a young ass and makes his entry, this to fulfill Zch 9.9, the entire verse following as “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass.” In vs. 9 the Lord gives two similar commands, the first with regard to the daughter of Zion: *gyl* or rejoice is with the adverb *me’od* and the second with regard to the daughter of Jerusalem: *ruah* or shout aloud. The reason for both? The king is coming in accord with the Zechariah quote as triumphant and victorious, the adjective *tsadyq* and the verb *yashah*. In addition to these, the king is humble or *hany* which also connotes being afflicted. Once this king arrives in Jerusalem, vs. 30 has the Lord acting on his behalf, that is, removing weapons,

etc. from her midst and having him commanding peace or *shalom*. Thus he will work from outside in and from inside out. The result is a widespread dominion, *mashal* also as rule.

Vs. 16 may seem like a passing observation, but it's very important. Here the disciples who were also caught up with this commotion failed to grasp (*ginosko*) its significance. Although they didn't realize it at the time, they were witnessing fulfillment of two scriptural references in quick succession. Here the point of actual remembrance is when Jesus is glorified, *doxazo* pertaining not just to Jesus' crucifixion but to his resurrection. While true, it seems that only with the advent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost did all this become clear. Furthermore, the disciples were endowed with the capacity to speak of what happened to Jesus and to do so with authority. Fortunately for them, the confusion with regard to Jesus' *doxazo* didn't have to wait long, otherwise, it would drive them crazy trying to decipher what had transpired.

The last reference with respect to *doxazo* is 11.4 which gives a hint as to the use at hand: "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." Another reference earlier in the Gospel is 2.22: "When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken." In both instances the verb *mimneskomai* or to remember is used. As for the scriptures, specific references are lacking though John has in mind the so-called suffering servant in Isaiah.

Vs. 17 mentions the crowd or *ochlos* again, this time as bearing witness, *martureo*. However, it's specified as pertaining to those who had been with Jesus when he raised Lazarus from the dead. In exasperation all the Pharisees could do is exclaim that the entire world has gone after Jesus. As for the stir he had caused, one wonders what happened upon his arrival in Jerusalem. Because an *ochlos* is involved, we can be pretty certain they dispersed at once, more so because they were getting ready for the Passover. Another motive for their quick dispersal, perhaps the singular one, was fear of reprisals from the Roman occupiers.

The small word or conjunctive *de in* the beginning of vs. 20 translated as "now" serves to shift attention to Greeks ⁴ who were part of those pilgrims going to the feast or *heorte*. Like everyone else, they went to worship, *proskuneo*, the root meaning to kiss or give reverence prefaced with the preposition *pros*, indicative of direction towards-which. Mention of these foreigners show that word about Jesus had spread widely even though they may not have come directly from Greece itself but were living in or around Israel. They were informed about Jesus' disciples and upon hearing one of them with a Greek sounding name, that is, Philip, they decided to approach him, *proserchomai*, another verb prefaced with *pros*. Philip

⁴The NIV says of them in a footnote, "Probably 'Godfearers,' people attracted to Judaism by its monotheism and morality but repelled by its nationalism and requirements such as circumcision. They worshipped in the synagogues but did not become proselytes."

complied and informed Andrew (another Greek name), the two decided to check things out with Jesus.

Vs. 23 has Jesus “answering (*apokrino*) them” which seems to be Philip and Andrew. As for these foreigners who had initially made the inquiry, what they heard was mediated by the two disciples, not coming from Jesus himself. Philip and Andrew left the Greek pilgrims to ask Jesus who communicated to them what follows. Jesus gets right into what’s on top of his mind, wasting no words which are intended not just for the Greeks but for the Jews and those of any other nationality.

In vs. 23 Jesus speaks of the hour or *hora* as having already come compared with earlier references such as 7.30 where has not yet arrived. He does so in an objective sort of way, as speaking of another person, the Son of man. This hour is marked by him being glorified, *doxazo*. Jesus fleshes this out by saying that a grain of wheat needs to fall into the ground to produce much fruit. In this process, however, the seed can choose simply to remain (*meno*) there and not, if you will, die. Actually it will die but in a way different from the death Jesus infers.

In vs. 25 Jesus speaks of the same thing but more directly when contrasting that love of one’s life results in losing it compared with the other way around. The two verbs are *phileo* and *miseo*. The former as applicable to one’s *psuche* or soul suggests being on friendly terms with it or better put, to be comfortable in one’s own skin. At first glance you’d think *phileo* would work towards preservation but instead, tends toward destruction, *apollumi*. On the other hand, *miseo* also as to despise results in *phulasso* or to keep under guard, this lasting literally into (*eis*) life which is eternal.

So without saying it directly to the Greeks but through his two disciples, Jesus is inviting both, if you will, to serve him, *diakoneo* essentially as to function or to give assistance as an intermediary, hence the significance of the preposition *dia* or through prefaced to the verbal root. Such service rests upon a willingness to follow Jesus, *akoloutheo* which connotes accompaniment. In this way both *diakoneo* and *akoloutheo* work hand-in-hand. However, the nature of both isn’t spelled out. While they are important, being in the same place as Jesus, if you will, is applicable to the person engaged in both. Thus being with Jesus results from the interaction of both verbs working together.

Jesus couldn’t wrap up this message to be passed on by not mentioning the Father. This is done by singling out the fact that the Father will honor anyone engaged in that *diakoneo* as applicable to himself. *Timaō* or to honor implies having high regard.

Although what follows in vs. 27 may or may not be intended for the Greeks, Jesus can’t help but shift emphasis to how he feels right now. All the strife with religious authorities right

from the beginning of his ministry has caught up with him causing his soul or *psuche* to be troubled or *tarasso*. Clearly the adoration just shown to him by the crowd has faded almost instantly. He now puts two rhetorical questions to himself which turn out to be as one: what he should now say and have the Father save (*sozo*) him from this hour, the *hora* which as noted above, has arrived.

Chapter Thirteen

This chapter sets the stage for the Last Supper with *de* translated as “now.” Again we have mention of the Passover or just before it with Jesus knowing that his hour had come, *oida* and *hora*. Knowledge of this hour had been mentioned before but this time there’s a finality about it, Jesus’ departure from the world. Furthermore, it has a specific destination in mind, the Father. The verb *metabaino* with *pros* signifies this departure, a transferal from (*meta*) in the sense of leaving-after with regard to somewhere else. Here the *pros* relevant to the Father stands out all the more by reason of the *ek* or from with regard to the world or *kosmos*. Thus we have three prepositions at work: *meta*→*ek*→*pros* or from→out of→>towards. Despite the pain and anguish to ensue, phrasing it as such can’t but impart a genuine longing to accompany Jesus on the part of his disciples. However, shortly this desire will be put to a severe test.

This opening verse adds poignant words of Jesus, that is, loving his very own in the world or *kosmos*, the verb *agapao* with the past tense of *ginomai*, to be or to become. Implied is that though they are not to accompany Jesus in the very near future, they are with him by reason of their close association. As for those who are the object of this *agapao*, chances are he’s referring to both his disciples and few close friends such as Martha, Mary and Lazarus. And so his *agapao* is literally “into (*eis*) the end” or *telos* which applies to his death as well as connoting completion of his mission.

Vs. 2 begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as “and” which indicates that John wastes no time recounting that supper or *deipnos* is under way. The Passover isn’t mentioned, for as a footnote in the NIV says, “Some believe that this celebration was a fellowship meal eaten sometime before the Passover Feast.” Regardless, it is secondary to the intent of this document whose primary focus is to consider the text as an aide for doing *lectio divina*.

Closely tied in with the sense of immediately implied by the conjunctive of vs 2 are Jesus’ words that the devil is directly responsible for Judas Iscariot betraying him. It’s hard to get them out of one’s mind, for despite the sublime words that follow, the presence of Judas remains hovering in the background. Note that the verb *ballo* or to throw, to cast is the root for the noun devil or *diabolos*, the one who casts obstacles in the way. Two key words are connected with *ballo*, *hede* and *eis* or “already” with respect to “into (*eis*) the heart” or

kardia. Here is the place where Judas' betrayal is born, *paradidomai* or to hand over-beside (*para*).

Jesus is operating under the assumption that what he had just said will come to fruition shortly. In other words, two distinct currents are going on and are about to collide. This knowledge to which Jesus alone is privy is why vs. 3 begins with the present tense of *oida* or knowing that the Father has entrusted all things into his hands. In addition, Jesus had come from God and was returning to him. Such words make more acceptable what is about to happen, difficult as it will be. The two verbs are *exerchomai* and *hupago* with the two prepositions *apo* and *pros*, that is, to come and to go.

Vs. 4 continues as an extended sentence begun in vs. 3 where Jesus rises from table and lays aside any external garments that would get in the way of washing the feet of his disciples. What makes this significant is that he wipes their feet with the towel girding him. Thus Jesus, his garments and towel, the act of washing and the disciples are one and the same. When Jesus comes to Peter, he balks, asking why. He does so presumably after having seen the other disciples complying and without raising any objections. To him it should be the other way around. Jesus responds calmly, that Peter doesn't comprehend this now but will do so at a later time.

Note the two verbs *oida* and *ginosko*. The former which is in the present tense means to have information whereas the latter which is in the future tense leans more toward recognizing. So we could say that *oida* will transform into *ginosko* or having information will transform into recognition. Obviously Peter was making a scene before the other disciples who must have been annoyed at his behavior. However, for him this behavior was not out of the ordinary. The only thing they could do was to remain silent. As for Judas, he knew Peter to be impetuous, someone who would turn on Jesus but just as quickly repent and be even more faithful. And so it had a dreadfully profound impact on him. He couldn't get out of there fast enough. That, of course, would take place shortly.

In vs. 8 Peter persists that Jesus does not wash his feet. Despite this sharp, disagreement Jesus is moved at his sincerity. It's a quality that will remain constant despite serious denials soon to take place of which Peter is completely ignorant. What changed Peter's mind—and he does so right away, typical of him—is that he asks or better, demands that Jesus wash him through and through. The words which changed his mind was that if Jesus wasn't allowed to continue, Peter would have no part or *meros* with (*meta*) him. Among other things that rushed through Peter's mind with these words was remembrance of Jesus having called him the rock on which he would build his church.

In vs. 10 Jesus continues speaking with Peter, namely, that a person who has taken a bath need not wash again except for his feet. The reason? A person invited to a celebration

washes beforehand and because he has to walk to the place where it will take place, he washes his feet before entering by way of courtesy. Jesus extends this example to all the disciples (presumably Peter was the last whose feet had been washed), that they are clean all over. This is expressed by two adjectives, *katharos* and *holos* or clean and entire. However, it does not apply to someone present, that name being left unsaid. We don't have the response of the disciples who must have been shocked at such words. From then on they couldn't help but keep their eyes fixed upon each other for signs of guilt or shame but apparently couldn't detect anything. Whoever it was indeed put on a good show of hiding his intent.

Vs. 12 begins with *hote houn*, literally as "when then" which shows completion of the foot washing before moving to what happens next or when things start getting really tense. Jesus asks more or less rhetorically if his disciples knew (*ginosko*) what he had just done to them. Although no answer is expected, we can be sure that each disciple was deeply moved but hadn't the slightest clue. Also Jesus knew that they would abandon him when things got rough but was able to see it was temporary. They would return stronger than ever.

Jesus recognizes that the disciples have been in the habit of calling him Teacher and Lord, *Didaskalos* and *Kurios*, rightly so, the adjective *kalos* being used fundamentally as beautiful. It's something they've been doing out of respect from the day they had joined him. In accord with this twofold office, Jesus says that he's giving an example or *hupodeigma* or pattern to follow, the preposition *hupo* or under prefaced to *deigma* also example as well as proof. In the situation at hand, Jesus encourages his disciples to manifest this *hupodeigma* to each other, something they were incapable of doing at the moment.

Keeping in line with what Jesus had just said, vs. 16 begins with a double *amen* or "truly truly," this being indicative of important words he's about to say. At hand is a servant-master relationship (*doulos* and *kurios*), the former also as slave and the latter as master of this slave. Such words are meant to flesh out what Jesus says of himself as someone who had been sent. As for the one sending, he says nothing, but by now the disciples know it's the Father. The noun *apostolos* for this sending is the only occasion in the Gospel along with the verb *pempo*. That is to say, an *apostolos* is someone who is sent like those disciples present with Jesus who are entrusted with passing on a communication.

Jesus posits a condition in vs. 17. If the disciples are aware of (*oida*) what he has just said, they are blessed, *makarios* also as fortunate or happy. Bound up with such happiness is the necessity of doing what he had been talking about as symbolized by the washing of feet. He qualifies this *makarios* in vs. 18 by saying that it applies to the larger picture of fulfilling the scriptures, *pleroo*. The scriptural passage at hand is Ps 41.9 which runs in full as "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted who ate of my bread has lifted his heel against me." The Hebrew for "bosom friend" is "man of peace" or *shalom* makes the application with regard

to Judas all the more poignant. Then we have the verb *gadal* which reads literally as “has made great his heel on me.” It couldn’t get more personal than this.

After these breathtaking words Jesus adds that he’s speaking as such now in order that those present may believe (*pisteuo*) that “I am he,” words which cannot help but echo the “I am who am” of Ex 3.14. Jesus concludes this part of his attempt to encourage his disciples by saying that any person who receives one whom he has sent has received him personally. This means a mutuality exists between Jesus and those associated with him. The verbs are helpful to keep in mind: *lambano* with regard to *pempo*, to receive and to send, the two being interchangeable. Jesus could have explained all this *ad nauseam*. However, it was completely lost on the disciples as too much to absorb. Not only that, Jesus is just beginning. Clearly there’s a need for some other divine person to clarify such words. That will come fairly soon with Pentecost.

Because Jesus was fully aware of Judas working behind his back, he couldn’t help but be troubled, *tarasso* aptly used here and in vs. 21 as to cause movement by shaking. Applied to his spirit or *pneuma* it’s even worse, his very essence. This *tarasso* then moved Jesus to give testimony or *martureo*. It’s a more solemn way of speaking of Judas who will betray him, *paradidomi* with literally “from (*ex*) you.” This naturally made the disciples to look—gawk would be more like it—at each other, *blepo* with *eis*, “into each other.” This *blepo* doesn’t say anything about the actual look on their faces which is easy to assume through the verb *aporeo* also as to be in doubt. While less troublesome physically speaking than *tarasso*, it’s more pervasive and longer lasting. Already the seeds of abandoning Jesus are sown and will come to fruition shortly.

Vs. 23 mentions one of the disciples singled out as being loved (*agapao*) by Jesus though he isn’t named. Such *agapao* is displayed openly with regard to the other disciples which must have been a cause for jealousy with him now lying close to the breast of Jesus. However, they kept it to themselves. The verb for reclining is *anakeimai*, the preposition *ana* as on or upon along with *en* or “in” with regard to the *kolpos* of Jesus which also can mean womb or the fold of a garment. So Peter swallowed his pride and despite his brashness, shows some restraint not typical of him. He asks his fellow disciple to inquire about the identity of the betrayer, the verb being *punthanomai*. However, he does so not openly but by nodding toward the disciple, *neuo*. This is remarkable, really, because of the close proximity of all three. Jesus took it in stride, knowing that it was simply Peter being Peter. He knew just as well as that such a question would soon apply to him though not with such fatal consequences.

Without hesitation the disciple asks Jesus who will betray him, his location being identified a second time in vs. 25 as close to the breast of Jesus, the verb not being *anakeimai* but another one with the preposition *ana*, that is, *anapipto* which infers reclining on a couch.

Vs. 26 has Jesus responding right away barely aware of Peter and the other disciple so close to him. He agrees to reveal the betrayer's identity by giving a morsel of bread dipped (in wine?), *psomion* being almost a crumb. This implies someone very close to Jesus though not as close as the disciple reclining on his breast as well as Peter. All Jesus had to do was reach over and extend this *psomion*. Judas is identified not by name but elaborated in a deliberate way, the son of Simon Iscariot. All this takes place in a very uncomfortable, intimate situation which enhances the betrayal about to take place.

Vs. 27 begins with *kai meta* or "then after the morsel" as if to get that over as quickly as possible so Judas could leave and carry out his betrayal. If things weren't tense and dramatic enough, we have Satan added to the mix, the only time he's mentioned in the Gospel which is significant. However, he's the same as the devil in vs. 2 as having already entered Judas. Most likely the disciples were unaware of all this, thinking that when Jesus was speaking with Judas, he was asking him to purchase necessary items for the feast, most likely the Passover. That makes the observation above from the NIV footnote plausible, that what had taken place thus far wasn't directly tied into the Passover. However, that is secondary to this document. As for the general sense concerning Judas, note the word beginning vs. 29, *tines* or "some." It implies that other disciples suspected something was up and it wasn't good.

Vs. 30 is significant in and by itself. After Judas had taken the morsel, it says that it was night. Not only that, Judas left immediately, *euthus*.

Note a certain parallel in vs. 31 between *erchomai* and *doxazo*, to go out and to glorify, the two happening simultaneously. As for the latter, it occurs twice: once with regard to the Son of man and the other with regard to God but qualified as being "in him." The next verse spells this out. Should God be glorified in Jesus, he will do the same in himself. Not only that, but it will happen at once, *euthus*. Compare this *euthus* with the one of vs. 30, the suddenness of Judas' departure. All this can make Jesus increasingly isolated, even from those closest to him. Surely he must have thought of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, wishing they were present. Then again, they would get in the way of what's about to happen to him.

Jesus addresses his disciples as little children in vs. 33, *teknon* being a term of endearment. Also given how they've comported themselves thus far, it can have a less than desirable association. Without knowing the details, each disciple realized their relationship with Jesus is coming to an end, especially when he said that he'll be with them a short time even if they seek him, *zeteo*. Throughout this all it really is amazing how incredulous are the disciples, and have been as such from the start. That means Jesus has to be firm as well as clear as possible which is why he adds that they cannot come where he's going, *erchomai* and *hupago*, the former the common verb to go and the latter more to withdraw or to take away.

The only concrete way the disciples can cope with this impending loss is by Jesus giving them a new commandment, *entole*. A commandment is something familiar to them as devout Jews and is a kind of anchor keeping them from falling apart. That consists of having *agape* or the verb *agapao* not in a general sense but for one another. Jesus puts himself as the model here, *kathos*→*hina* or “as→in order that.” If it weren’t for this, such love would be impossible to implement. Furthermore, everyone will know (*ginosko*) that *agape* is the chief characteristic of being his disciple though looking at it now, there’s a lot to be desired.

The remaining verses of Chapter Thirteen consist of a lively give-and-take between Jesus and Peter. Peter is relieved that Judas had been exposed. He had gotten this as almost certain confirmation from having asked the beloved disciple. Still, Peter remains uncertain about himself and by no means is at peace. This is manifested in the way he presses Jesus about not being able to go with him followed by a willingness to die on his behalf. Sad as well as noble. All this will come to a head shortly and despite difficulties ahead, Peter at last will be at peace and be able to govern the fledgling church. However, Chapter Thirteen ends on a somber note. Before this comes to fruition, Peter will have denied Jesus not just once or twice but three times. The verb is *arneomai*, basically to refuse to consent and is quite different from *paradidomai* or to hand over as it applies to Judas.